

NLF MP Case No. 98-36

#15.

27 June 1975

DCI BRIEFING FOR
27 JUNE NSC MEETING

ANGOLA

I. The current situation in Angola is highly unstable. Rivalry between contending nationalist groups has featured increasing violence, with each group trying to stake out territory and gain military superiority before independence on November 11 and final Portuguese withdrawal by next February.

A. The fighting over the past few months has been between the two largest groups, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, led by Agostinho Neto, and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola led by Holden Roberto. A third group in the picture is the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, led by Jonas Savimbi.

1. In action early this month Neto's Popular Movement pushed the National Front

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out of some areas north and east of Luanda, thus blocking the Front's supply lines into the capital.

2. Although there were some clashes in Luanda this month, the two remain essentially in a standoff there.

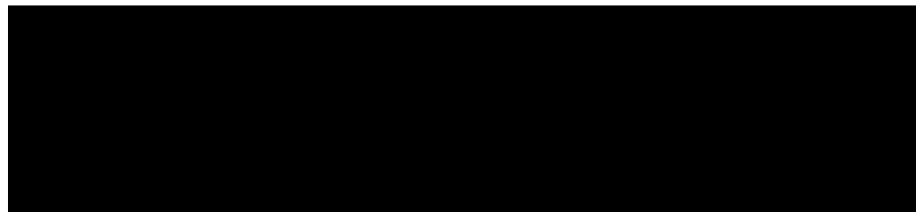
a. Military control of Luanda by either group would necessarily not determine control of or influence over the rest of Angola, particularly in the rich agricultural areas or along all the main transportation routes.

3. Roberto's National Front still remains strongly entrenched in large areas of northern Angola where it has substantial tribal support.

B. New fighting can erupt at any time:

-- There is a continuing buildup of the military forces of all three nationalist groups;

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-- Armed and undisciplined civilians are in Luanda on behalf of the Popular Movement

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(C)

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- Neither major group is able or willing to exercise effective control over its own forces;
 - All three groups are initiating military operations in parts of Angola yet untouched by the fighting where no single group has an edge; and
 - Politicking for the October elections for a constituent assembly will increase tensions.
- C. The oil-rich enclave of Cabinda remains a tinderbox. The Popular Movement has a slight military edge there, but both other groups also have forces active.
1. All three want the enclave to remain a part of an independent Angola.
 2. The picture is complicated by the presence of a factionalized separatist movement supported by both Zaire and Congo.
 3. Both countries have endorsed Cabindan independence, and any intensification of the fighting there could bring outside intervention either directly or in support of the separatists.

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II. The transitional government installed last January has proved unworkable.

A. It is constructed on a system of checks and balances, but in the current climate members of the three liberation groups, as government officials, concentrate on the competition between them.

1. Portuguese officials are not effective -- they are caught in the middle.
2. The liberation groups have not honored their commitment to establish an integrated national army as called for in the independence accord.

B. The 24,000 Portuguese troops are mostly kept in Luanda. They will intervene in the fighting only to protect the whites.

1. The Portuguese have in effect abandoned

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lists, [REDACTED]

2. Portuguese forces are scheduled to begin withdrawal in October and are to be totally removed by next February.

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3. There is nothing in the independence accord to prevent the Portuguese from withdrawing as fast as possible after October.
- C. Lisbon's policy insofar as it has one, is neutrality among the factions.
1. Portugal wants to protect its important agricultural and mining interests.
 2. The Portuguese also want to be on good terms with whoever ends up in charge after independence, but their ability to affect events is diminishing.
 3. At this point, the Portuguese leaders' major concern is to prevent civil war, which could have serious political repercussions in Lisbon. They hope to avoid, for example, an increase in the number of white refugees returning to Portugal who would add to the turbulence there.
 4. Thus, Lisbon can be expected to expend considerable diplomatic effort to reduce tension in Angola, and would certainly welcome similar efforts by interested third countries.

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III. The role of outside powers in supplying military assistance to the nationalist groups remains a key factor.

A. The Soviet Union has been a long time supporter of Neto's Popular Movement, providing both arms and cash during the years of the insurgency against the Portuguese.

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2.

3. Soviet long-range goals in Angola are unclear, but in the short run Moscow supports the Popular Movement in a situation where all three nationalist groups are viable contenders for power.

B. Peking has had some association with all of the liberation movements in the past, but the Chinese are most closely associated with Roberto's National Front.

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1. They have supplied military equipment as well as some training.

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Chinese assistance has helped the Front to establish its forces firmly in northern Angola.

C. Roberto has had little success in finding assistance elsewhere.

1. Zaire's President Mobutu has loose family ties with Roberto and has long supported him and the Front with funds, arms, and training. He has also allowed Roberto to maintain his headquarters in Zaire.

a. Recently, however, Mobutu has cut back his assistance to the Front, in part because of his government's serious financial problems and because he is cooling toward Roberto.

b. Mobutu is alarmed over the Front's recent setbacks and feels Roberto's position has been damaged because he refuses to leave Zaire and go to Luanda.

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C.

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2. Mobutu, of course, has some serious concerns of his own.

a. Zaire is experiencing a severe foreign exchange shortage because of the low price of copper on the international market.

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IV. The prospects for Angola between now and November are poor. Further violence could take place and edge the territory closer to civil war. At best, Angola will lurch along and become independent without a strong leader.

A. The constituent assembly scheduled to be elected in October is supposed to select a head of government of an independent Angola, but new violence could force a postponement.

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- B. At a meeting in Kenya last week Savimbi, Roberto, and Neto reached what amounts to an uncertain truce that merely postpones a confrontation.
1. They "agreed" to a number of measures, such as disarming civilians, designed to prevent new fighting. Similar agreements in the past have failed, however.
 2. All three contenders seem to recognize the inconclusiveness of the pact. They state that they will meet again to try another form for the transfer of power if the elections are not held.
- V. After independence, it now appears that no single liberation group in Angola will have the power to impose its own ideology as national policy.
- A. If civil war is averted and the three liberation groups establish some kind of coalition, the government's policies probably will be a delicate mix of the philosophies of the two major groups.
 - B. Both major groups want a non-aligned foreign policy and will seek to maintain some balance between East and West.

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1. The Popular Movement, if dominant, would establish a high-centralized and authoritarian one-party regime with a pronounced socialist orientation and close ties to the communist world, with US ties kept to a minimum.
 2. The National Front would probably seek to establish a highly nationalistic and personalized regime. Because of the Front's rather narrow political base, an FNLA state might be highly coercive. The Front would likely accept development and/or military aid from the West as well as the East.
- C. Both groups can be expected to nationalize Angola's major productive enterprises, but the Front probably would be more hospitable toward selective Western investment than the Popular Movement.
- D. As long as an independent Angola does not restrict access to its transportation facilities, good relations with its neighbors Zaire and Zambia probably can be maintained.
1. An independent Angola will give moral and political support to black nationalists in

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Rhodesia and South Africa. It would probably not become immediately involved in supporting insurgencies there, however, because of distance and the dominant role now being played by Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique in seeking a settlement with the Smith regime.

VI. If, on the other hand, protracted civil war develops, Congo and Zaire could be brought into the conflict.

A. Civil war could also convince either one, or both to move into Cabinda in an attempt to annex or neutralize the enclave.

B. Continued fighting in Angola would exacerbate the confrontation between black and white Africa. It would intensify the fears of Rhodesia and South Africa concerning black majority rule.

1. South Africa is particularly concerned that a communist or unfriendly regime in Angola might support guerrilla activity in Namibia.

2. A hostile or unstable Angola would increase South African pressure on us to support its domestic and international policies. This

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would complicate our efforts to promote peaceful solutions to Southern Africa's racial problems.

3. South Africa does not seem to be planning any action to counter this threat.

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